THE GEEK FANTASY MEN'S MAGAZINE

NEXT LEVEL MAGAZINE

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2014
JUSTICE LEAGUE VARIANT

JUSTICE LEAGUE

GET IN-DEPTH: THE OLD WORLD VS. NEW 52

plus...

HOLLY WOLF

TOP 10
THE FANTASY TOY LIST!

COMIC BOOKS REVIEWS

AVENGERS ARENA
INFINITY + XMEN
BATTLE OF THE ATOM

AGENTS OF S.H.I.E.L.D + ARROW

MID-SEASON TV REVIEW

JASMINE DUSTIN

MEETING ROBERT DOWNEY JR. ON IRON MAN SET AND MORE!

+

GF NATALIA CASSIE CHELSEA

THE GEEK FANTASY ADVICE COLUMNIST

ASK ASHLEY

More ...

- GYK: PAULINA + ASHLEY
- COSPLAYER: KATYBEAR
- THE NEXT COMIC CONS

THENEXTLEVELMAGAZINE.COM

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2014

SHARE MY COSPLAY

To do List

- ✓ Design Character
- ✓ Buy Materials
- ✓ Finish Cosplay
- ✓ Take Pictures
- ✓ Submit to Share My Cosplay!

Sharing the the Cosplay for you!

Visit us on Facebook at:
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> "I'M A NERD! I LOVE TO DRESS UP ALL THE TIME. YOU SHOULD SEE MY COSTUMES, ANYWHERE FROM A SLAVE PRINCESS TO SUPER GIRL!"

NLM first met the infamous Jesse Jane when we featured her in our September/ October 2013 issue with an in-depth Interview by Lance Paul aptly titled: *Getting Some Adult Attention*.

We quickly learned all about her geek fantasies and how they were surprisingly similar to ours. In fact, she would have no problem making whoopee on top of a pile of comics (no mint issues, of course).

And don't think that she's one of those girls that can't handle your gaming obsession. She plays Call of Duty and Madden. We're pretty sure she could be close to perfect at this point.

Not unlike most ladies, she favors Catwoman but she has an old-school favorite: She-Ra. The Princess of Power in a Wonder Woman'esque costume laying on a bed of comics? We're finding it hard to continue without a break... but for the sake of our readers, and our pants, we must!

As for that "40 Year Old Virgin" toy collection you have going on, you don't have to worry about Jesse running for cover or making you sell them all. She loves your toys. In fact, she would bring those into the bedroom as well or get into an epic nerd battle with them.

It's hard to tell if this buxom blonde could be more of an ideal geek fantasy and trust us, we didn't make any of this up. Granted she has a huge following from her Adult Film career, but don't think for one second that our 2014 Geek Fantasy Woman of the Year is only surface sexy. This strikingly sensual lady has more than enough on her geek card and could probably put a lot of us to shame, if not just be an amazingly welcomed surprise.

So without further ado, we invite you all to free your hands and give a round of applause to Next Level Magazine's first Geek Fantasy Woman of the Year: Jesse Jane.

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LET IT REIGN

Next Level Magazine

Crowns

OUR VERY **FIRST**

Geek Fantasy

WOMAN OF THE YEAR

Jesse Jane

PHOTO BY **KYLE GOLDIE** | PHOTO ASST. **JAMESON GAMBLE** | STYLING **BY HALEY WILSON** | SWIMSUIT BY **LYBETHRAS SWIM WEAR**

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JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2014

STAY IN TOUCH!

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Next Level Magazine

In the wake of the buzz over the casting of the highly anticipated 2015 ***Batman vs. Superman*** flick, NLM takes an in-depth look at the Justice League and it's "cast of characters" with a little help from Canadian Model **Holly Wolf**!

WONDER HOW FAST SHE WAS GOING WHEN SHE REALIZED SHE HAD LOST HER TOP?

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Season 2 Review

Want to see more of The Flash? Well you're in luck! The CW's **Arrow** premiered the origin story of this DC character in December 2013 in anticipation of the new show airing Summer/Fall 2014. And if you're having a hard time getting your girlfriend to watch Arrow, even after showing her those nearly-naked ads they keep putting on the back of your latest comic book, just tell her "*the openly-gay cutie Sebastian who was a Warbler on Glee is the new Flash.*" You don't have to understand it but she will, and she'll not only watch it with you, she'll remind you it's on. You're welcome.

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Carlos Burger II [2011-2013]

ASHLEY BROWN | PHOTOGRAPHY BY **KYLE GOLDIE**

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THE CON

Comic-Cons or conventions for just comics, science fiction, movies, video games and animation have been going on since the 1960's. Designed to house the greatest artists and their product of any of those respected genres, the "con" is now more than just a place for "geeks" to speak languages no one else understands. The Con is a place to share the lore, history, and development of incredible artists and creators and, of course, buy really cool and exclusive merchandise! It's a place to meet the creators of your favorite stories, games and drawings and hear them talk about their inspiration. It's a destination, a yearly event, for the fans to meet the artists in the biggest rooms in cities around the world and experience it in a super-saturated environment filled with hundreds and thousands of people that all have a similar obsession. It's the ultimate cool and an event to plan for every year, and yes, even make a special "uniform" specifically to boast your favorite character.

FEBRUARY

1st BUT-CON
Butler, PA

1st GREENVILLE COMIC BOOK AND SPORTS CARD SHOW
Greenville, SC

1st AWESOME COMIC BOOK COLLECTOR SHOW
Spring, TX

2nd COMIC BOOK AND NON-SPORTS CARD SHOW
Laurel, MD

2nd ATLANTA COMIC CONVENTION
Atlanta, GA

7th - 9th WIZARD WORLD NEW ORLEANS
New Orleans, LA

7th - 9th INDIAN COMIC CON
New Delhi, DL

8th JIM AND DAN'S COMIC AND TOY
Miamisburg, OH

8th - 9th CBC COMIC BOOK AND TOY SHOW
Ocala, FL

9th LOS ANGELES COMIC BOOK AND SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION
Los Angeles, CA

15th - 16th WARNER ROBINS COMIC CON
Warner Robins, GA

21st - 23rd NO SUCH CONVENTION
Poughkeepsie, NY

22nd MIGHTY CON DUPAGE
Wheaton, IL

22nd - 23rd ULTRACON OF SOUTH FLORIDA
Ft Lauderdale, FL

22nd - 23rd CBC COMIC BOOK AND TOY SHOW
St. Augustine, FL

23rd NWI COMIC CON
Schererville, IN

23rd X-TRAVACON
Livonia, MI

23rd AWESOME COMIC BOOK COLLECTOR SHOW
Fort Worth, TX

23rd VICTORIA COMIC BOOK EXPO
Victoria, BC, Canada

23rd COLUMBUS COMIC BOOK SHOW
Columbus, GA

HAVE WE MISSED SOMETHING?

We have to admit that there are far more Cons than we can possibly put our fingers on, and thank goodness for that! But in the midst of creating our list, we may have missed your favorite event. How could we? If you think we should list an event for our readers to attend, please send us an email so we don't miss any of the action! And who knows, perhaps our readers and maybe even our staff might visit your venue!

Info@TheNextLevelMagazine.com

SAN DIEGO COMIC CON PREVIEW

JULY 24-27, 2014
San Diego Convention Center
111 W. Harbor Dr., San Diego, CA 92101

The San Diego Comic Con is arguably the year's go-to Convention. It's totally massive and involves more than just this Convention. They also put on Wondercon a few months earlier in April and APE (Alternative Press Expo) in October.

Their official website gives you all the details on what is going on as well as the special guests who will be featured at this year's con!

The Short List of special guests who will be attending the event:

Amanda Conner - Artist
Eleanor Davis - Cartoonist/Illustrator
Jane Espenson - Writer/Producer
Raymond E. Feist - Author
Drew Friedman - Illustrator
Michael T. Gilbert - Writer/Artist
Willie Ito - Animator/Cartoonist
Caitlin R. Kiernan, - Author
Lucy Knisley - Writer/Artist
David Lasky - Arist
Graham Nolan - Arist
Jimmy Palmiotti - Writer
Benoît Peeters - Writer
Don Rosa - Cartoonist
Jim Rugg - Artist/Illustrator
François Schuiten - Artist
Scott Snyder - Writer
Fiona Staples - Artist
Gene Luen Yang - Writer/Artist

For More Information about Special Guests and Events, visit: **Comic-Con.org**

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ASK ASHLEY

This unique advice column was born from an idea created by some of our online followers. We found that we were regularly receiving all types of questions about gaming, movies and Superhero lore. So we presented the idea of a Relationship Advice column unlike any other! Introducing: Ask Ashley! Next Level found a lady with the best combination of sexy and smart to give the geekiest of you fellas a chance to ask a beautiful women about women and what they really want.

GAME ON!

Meeting ladies while also being a gamer isn't the easiest task in the world. Most guys game at home, where their computer and consoles are. Not many random single ladies just walking on through your living room, let alone your bedroom, and since gaming tends to take hours of your life, mostly in the evenings, there are very few times where a gamer can meet ladies in a "typical dating" scenario.

Next Level received a very interesting email from a reader in Wisconsin. We're going to call him Chris since no one seems to want to reveal their real name, like there isn't more than one person with his real name in Wisconsin, but we'll indulge you, bud! Chris wrote us with a very interesting situation we thought many of you could relate to. We sent this email along to our lovely advice columnist for her take on his scenario. Let's read it...

> *I game on a regular basis: MMO (massive multi-player online). I have been playing with a particular girl. We've spoken a bit via the game and I think she's really funny and awesome but I don't know where to go from here. Should I ask for her number or maybe her Facebook? I don't want to seem creepy and lose an awesome gaming-buddy. Help!*
>
> *- Chris, Wisconsin*

Dear Lost Online: What the hell are you waiting for?! One of the best things about MMO is the fear of rejection never has to manifest itself face-to-face. Yes, I understand a great gaming pal is at risk here but think about what could be to gain; a high-class lady friend with whom we already know you share a pretty bad ass common interest!

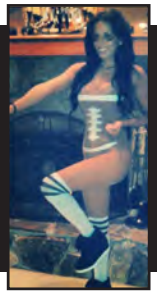
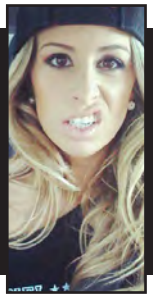
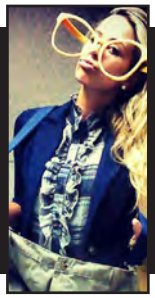
As for reaching out, I would start with social media and work your way up from there. Besides, Facebook has come a long way since Zuckerberg was in college and the new messenger app is practically texting anyway! The only difference is, asking for a Facebook profile link saves you from being outed of your intentions like asking for her digits directly would.

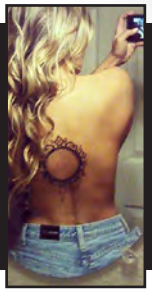
I mean really, who's to say she isn't on the other end wanting the same thing? Maybe she is old fashioned. (In a good way)The kind of gal who can allocate the hell out of her sworn swords in Game of Thrones, but still has enough self-respect to let the guy make the first move in the real world. All I'm saying is maybe the best way to step out of the friend zone is to send her a friend request.

It's your move Sammy, now send that gamer angel a link to your profile and let's get this start-to-a-beautiful-relationship show on the road!

- Ashley

GET TO KNOW *Ashley* WITH HER **Instagram**



*Have a Question? Write us on Twitter using **#AskAshley** or email us at: Submissions@TheNextLevelMagazine.com with "Ask Ashley" in the Subject line.*

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CASSIE CARDELLE

This Dark Knight loving lady hits all the right notes.

When it comes to ladies who look like Boston-born recording artist Cassie Cardelle, we have a hard time not giving up before we even try. From her big, brown eyes to her undeniable curves, this petite songwriting beauty is striking at any angle. So how do we remedy our trepidation? It's simple. We ask her.

WE HESITATE ON EXACTLY WHERE TO BEGIN SO LET'S START WITH SOMETHING WE CAN RELATE TO: WHO IS YOUR FAVORITE SUPERHERO?

Batman, because he's a dark, mysterious guy with cool gadgets and is more realistic than other Superheros.

SO IT'S NOT JUST MUSCLES FOR YOU. YOU'RE LOOKING FOR SOMETHING UNDERNEATH THE SUIT TOO?

I like humble, fit, quiet guys with nice eyes. I don't like guys that party a lot. They have to have a balanced and hard working lifestyle.

WE HAVE TO ADMIT, A LOT OF LADIES SAY THAT BUT THEY'RE REALLY DISTRACTED BY THE "SUPERMANS" OF THE WORLD. WHAT DRAWS YOU TO MORE THAN JUST THE "SUPER?"

I love when I connect with a guy on a mental level and not just physical. Guys that I can be my silly-self in front of are the best!

photography by **Kyle Goldie**
produced by **Fremavi Studios**

AGE
21

RELATIONSHIP STATUS
Single

NATIONALITY
Lebanese/Italian/English

RISE TO FAME
CMA's "Sweet Home Alabama" Season 2.

NEED TO KNOW
Grew up dancing ballet my whole life which has kept me flexible.

UNEXPECTED
[I'm] a tomboy. From climbing trees, to hikes, surfing, I love outdoor adventures and activities.

#Follow her @CassieCardelle

LOOK GUYS... SHE GIFT WRAPPED IT FOR YOU!

WARDROBE STYLIST **HALEY WILSON**, SUGAR SPICE SWIMWEAR I SWIMSUIT BY **HUSH LA** (AQUA SWIM) I JEWELRY BY **ROSE GONZALES JEWELRY**

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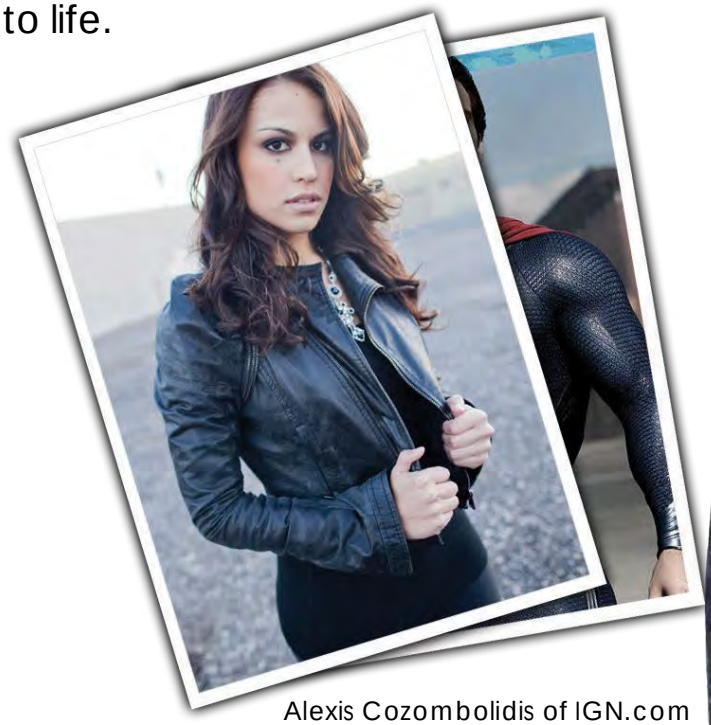

Alexis Cozombolidis of IGN.com
asked to be turned in the 'Woman of Steel'
Follower her on Twitter @LetsGetLexi

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Being JASMINE

From playing in the Lingerie Bowl to partying with Iron Man, **Jasmine Dustin** is starting off 2014 on the top of NLM's Geek Fantasy list!

EVERYONE HAS A HIDDEN OBSESSION, SOMETHING WE ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT. WE WANT TO KNOW YOURS!
Traveling or trying new restaurants. I'm a huge foodie!

IT DEFINITELY DOESN'T SHOW. IMPRESSIVE!
I should be 500 pounds. Thanks mom and dad for great genes.

AND YOUR GUILTY PLEASURE?
Pasta and a great bottle of Pinot Noir.

WHAT WAS IT LIKE TO PLAY IN THE LINGERIE BOWL?
Oh boy, I try to forget about playing in the Lingerie Bowl. I was the scrawniest of the girls, so I wasn't too much help. It was definitely a great workout though, so that was great.

PHOTOGRAPHER **TJ MANOU** I MAKE-UP / HAIR **TEAL DRUDA** I STYLIST **OLGA CHECHINA**

WorldMag

From playing a Supermodel on BET's new show *Being Mary Jane* to being on set next to Robert Downey Jr. in his Mark IV suit, Jasmine Dustin has had quite a successful career and she's not done yet!

WHAT WAS IT LIKE FILMING IN GEORGIA ON BET'S BEING MARY JANE?
Working in Atlanta on *Being Mary Jane* was great. Who can complain about working opposite the gorgeous Gabrielle Union? She's not only stunning, but so talented. My on-screen love interest wasn't too bad himself. Everyone was great to work with so I'm excited to see what happens with the show.

WE CAN'T IGNORE THAT YOU TEND TO PLAY CHARACTERS THAT ARE BEAUTIFUL WOMEN, MANY TIMES, AN ACTUAL MODEL. DID YOU EXPECT TO BE VOTED FHM'S SEXIEST MODEL?
It was an honor to be voted "Sexiest Model" by a magazine that features gorgeous women from all over the world. I've been lucky to be in FHM as many times as I have. Its fun to be able to get out of the fashion world of modeling and bring the sexy side out once in awhile.

AND WE APPRECIATE YOUR ENTHUSIASM! WE COULDN'T POSSIBLY CLOSE OUT THIS INTERVIEW WITHOUT ASKING WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO WORK WITH ROBERT DOWNEY JR. ON IRONMAN II.
I worked on Iron Man 2 with a bunch of my fellow Deal or No Deal "Briefcase Babes." It was a fun set to be on because all us girls were great friends. We watched Robert Downey train with his trainer everyday at lunch as we pigged out on candy in the trailer. It was definitely pretty incredible being around such talent.

PHOTOGRAPHER **RAQUEL RISCHARD** | MAKE-UP / HAIR **DANIEL CHINCHILLA** | STYLIST **ASHLEY PENNINGTON**

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From the pages of a comic book to the small-screen, NLM is ready to give our mid-season review on whether this new television series lives up to the incredible momentum Marvel Entertainment has established in the cinema, and how Joss Wedon has translated the comic book medium from the drawings on a page to the big-screen, and now to the small-screen.

Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.

Tuesday 8/7c ABC

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Next Level is all about reader involvement and submissions. Heck, we are a collective of fans, aren't we? We knew *Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D* could be a huge turning point for comic books, superheros and TV. Could there be a Thor TV show or maybe Iron Man? What possibilities! But we wanted the feedback from our readers on what they thought of comic book lore becoming so mainstream, it could be a hit TV show on a primetime station.

Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.

STRATEGIC HOMELAND INTERVENTION, ENFORCEMENT AND LOGISTICS DIVISION

written by Ashley Febbo

The heroes and villains of the Marvel Universe have been a vital part of my life since I was able to read. They taught me what it takes to be a real hero, that you need patience, understanding, tolerance, courage and the strength to not take a life but to kick serious ass! So the announcement of an eventual Avengers movie made me squeal with pure delight. Finally, a cluster of superheroes in a live action film where they all fight together! I was excited to see how it would be done, hopeful that the story would be portrayed well and with continuity to stories already in place. Anxiety, of course, that the filmmakers will totally screw it up and that twelve dollar ticket and ninety minutes of my life are gone forever to a frivolous cinematic flop. DC and Marvel are both guilty of a few indiscretions here and there. I still shudder when I think about Jonah Hex, Supergirl, Catwoman, Spiderman 3 and both Ghost Rider's. But I simply can't stop watching! I want, nay, I need to see the stories of my favorite champions and evildoers splashed out onto a 73-foot screen with booming surround sound, a huge bucket of popcorn and a Cherry Coke, no ice. The pop already comes out cold; ice is a rip-off and I will finish that popcorn before half of the movie is over. I will regret it later but still feel triumphant.

No one has given us more of a smorgasbord of movies to gorge ourselves on than Marvel. The Hulk, Iron Man, Thor and Captain America movies all lead up to one giant collaborative blockbuster where for the first time, all these heroes would be on the screen together. I was in a tizzy when I heard Joss Whedon would be directing The Avengers. I have been a huge fan of his work ever since Buffy. It was the anthem to my adolescence. Even Dollhouse had an interesting concept - if you don't think about the obvious pimping out of a hollow human being filled with a fraudulent persona to some rich degenerate. Joss got shanghaied when it came to the heartbreaking cancelation of Firefly. I don't care if you don't feel the same way; that was an amazing underrated show and I will miss it. The Avengers were a dream come true for the writing fanboy icon turned blockbuster director. The movie wasn't perfect; it had a clunky start but also a jocose demeanor, tons of action and it was fun as hell to watch. Now Marvel wants to invade our television screens on a primetime network with the action/drama series – Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.

Let's meet the players – First, we have the fearless leader, a resurrected Agent Phil Coulson (Clark Gregg) who is putting together a motley team of individuals with extraordinary gifts in certain areas of expertise. Then we have the stern, chiseled jaw (and abs) of Brett Dalton as Agent Grant Ward. He is the curt, disciplined, antisocial, black ops specialist; Ward is a human Swiss Army Knife who kind of acts like a tool. Ming Na Wen plays Melinda May, a.k.a. The Cavalry; she is a distant, slightly damaged weapons expert, first-rate pilot, one woman army and just overall badass. Skye (not her real name), played by Chloe Bennet is a civilian recruit, self-proclaimed hacktivist who seemingly wants to join the faceless organization that she has vehemently been against and tried to expose for so long.

Now for my favorite members of the team which are the brainy dynamic duo, Fitz & Simmons. Jemma Simmons (Elizabeth Henstridge) and Leo Fitz (Iain De Caestecker) are geniuses in their fields of bio-chemistry and engineering, especially weapons, like the Night-Night gun (working title) that has the ability to incapacitate your target with little to no real harm. I say little because you are still technically shooting someone. I'm still trying to figure out who's the guy and who's the girl most of the time. I know who's who while I'm watching the show but forget as soon as the episode is over. This is their first time in the field, they have no combat skills, bicker like an old married couple, and rattle on with complicated scientific Doctor Whovian explanations that none of the other characters understand. Their enthusiasm and child-like wonder to all things alien is positively contagious.

BRINGING COULSON BACK WAS A STRETCH, BUT A GREAT IDEA.

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Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. has great cinematography, bland characters, humorous dialogue, sweet gadgets, like the little robots named after the Seven Dwarfs and the 3D holographic models that we saw in the Iron Man movies. We get to see Lola again, the hover Corvette Tony gave to Phil. Watching the first episode, I kept wondering when Director Nick Fury would be making a cameo. I called it that Samuel L Jackson couldn't stay away for long, that guy is in everything and I was right! He showed up at the end of episode 2 to show his grievance of Coulson's team severely damaging their brand new stealth jet. Forced, but still funny. The ties the show has with the Cinematic Marvel Universe gives me an "I'm with the band" mentality when I understand the references, but Coulson does name drop way too much. For example, episode 8, "The Wall", was just a shameless promotion for Thor: The Dark World. The one-liners are clichéd with hackneyed deliveries; "Why can't Thor and his people send down the God of Cleaning Up?" Ugh... really? I enjoy the idea of cross-overs like with the Centipede program and Tesseract technology, but that episode was asinine.

I have always been a sucker for a good underdog story and that's who these characters represent. Joss loves a good story about the unsung heroes. The people that are ignored and seem irrelevant are the stars of the show. Joss is a co-creator but he's been concentrating on The Avengers 2, so his brother Jed and his wife took over directorial duties of Agents. ABC had so much confidence in S.H.I.E.L.D. being a massive hit that they built an entire night of new programming around it and put it opposite of #1 rated NCIS. The show debuted with a respectable 12 million viewers but those numbers are dwindling as the show presses on.

Bringing Coulson back was a stretch, but a great idea. Greg's character lasting beyond the first Iron Man movie is a testament to how much clout the fans have. We loved this enduring stone-faced official of S.H.I.E.L.D. who deals with Tony Stark's egregious and insubordinate attitude so much he turned into a recurring character. I am very intrigued with the mystery of how Coulson was brought back from the dead after being killed by Loki. All we know is Fury sent him to "Tahiti" and he keeps saying "it's a magical place." Obviously, Tahiti is a lie but Fury doesn't want Coulson to know the truth. I loved the Dollhouse reference when Coulson has a dream about "Tahiti" where he wakes up on a massage table on the beach and asks, "Did I fall asleep?" to which the masseuse responds, "For a little while." I would like to see where they take his character; he seems different since his near death experience and is struggling with being brought back. But again, I need more of a backstory to connect to his character. Many fans have started theorizing that he is a S.H.I.E.L.D. designed robot that in the comics is called a Life Model Decoy that duplicates all aspects of a living person. Coulson is your Everyman character and I like that about him. He, like the rest of his team, has no superpowers, no iron suit, just a state of the art flying command center, a couple geniuses, martial arts experts and a billion dollar organization at his back. No big deal.

We've also seen that Skye only joined The Rising Tide cyber terrorist group and chased after S.H.I.E.L.D. to find out about her past and birth parents. I always love the rebellious, smart-mouthed female character that breaks all the rules, but Skye's endless supply of inexperience, self-righteous talk and lip gloss is getting on my nerves. With Agent Ward, we saw a flashback to his childhood where he had an abusive brother that threatened him if he tried to save his little brother from drowning in a well. That episode wasn't clear on whether or not the brother actually died. I did not understand why they would choose to cut to a flashback while he's beating the crap out of juiced-up thugs with a rod of rage. Couldn't they have waited until after Ward was done taking out more than a dozen super strength crazies with an Asgardian Berserker Staff? Fitz and Simmons don't seem to have a history at all, but Agent May definitely caught my eye after every time someone finds out she's "The Cavalry", they get this wide-eyed, open-mouthed look of wonderment on their face. When her origin story was finally revealed, it was such a letdown and it was just Coulson recalling the events with little detail. All I found out was that there was a "gifted individual with worshippers" who took their people hostage, so May fixed the situation by going in unarmed and out-manned. Now that would have been the time for a cool flashback! I also think there is too much emphasis on Ward and Skye carrying the show; they're the only characters we've seen have their histories revealed. While the show has lacked a certain level of intensity and shock value, I never saw May and Ward hooking up. That was surprising! I thought for sure it was going to be all about the sexual tension between Skye and Ward. I wanted to see Coulson and May action; I think they go well together.

JOSS LOVES A GOOD STORY ABOUT THE UNSUNG HEROES. I LOVE THE IDEA OF THIS SHOW AND WOULD LOVE TO SEE IT SUCCEED.

Critics have not been very kind to Agents and Marvel fans have not been impressed in the least. They're probably just sick of typing out all those punctuations. Perhaps we just didn't see enough about S.H.I.E.L.D. in the films to really get excited about a series. The ingredients are there for an amazing show, but it's lacking depth and it's not appealing to a broader audience. Joss needs to hurry back from A2 duties and save this show from becoming another Dollhouse. A great question to ask oneself is – Would I like this show if it wasn't Marvel related? And the answer is, probably not. I watch out of nostalgia, loyalty and the hope it gets better. There are decade's worth of storylines from the comic books, but this show has been pussyfooting around several protagonists instead emphasizing on a singular common enemy.

I love the idea of this show and would love to see it succeed. I like being able to see things at the ground level and the aftershocks of what us mere mortals have to deal with when the superheroes are off doing their thing and the mess they leave in their wake. I want to see the question of what really makes a hero explored. You don't have to be a genetically altered super soldier, a God, a doctor with temper tantrums or a billionaire playboy philanthropist to be a hero. That's what these characters are supposed to represent. Us! I love to see ordinary people rising to extraordinary heights, but Agents hasn't even reached the middle of this slowly climbing rollercoaster. They still have time to make it better since ABC already ordered 22 episodes. I demand to see bigger sets and more action when a major studio and conglomerate are attaching their names to the series. Balls to wall people, it's go time! Mutant Co. has Disney money they can play with, I say use it. Marvel's Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. has so much potential it's sickening to see it with so much lackluster right now. But I hold fast to my faith that it can be brought off the crutches of the preceding films and stand on its own.

This fan-intensive review was written by a lovely blonde named Ashley from Ohio, USA who grew up on the lore of the comic book world and a passion for superheros. It's clear this proud comic-geek is more-than-qualified to be in our pages. Welcome!

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WE HAVE TO KNOW: WHAT DO YOU DO TO STAY IN SUCH GREAT SHAPE?

I'm a former ballet nerd. I studied for 17 years and it was my obsession. I was home schooled in high school and picked on for always being different. It's ironic; all those people who teased me are now coming out of the woodwork due to my success in modeling.

WARDROBE STYLIST **HALEY WILSON**, SUGAR SPICE SWIMWEAR | SWIMSUIT BY **ADICORA SWIMWEAR** | JEWELRY BY **SWEENIE SHAMANIE**

NATIONALITY
Cuban / Croatian

MEASUREMENTS
32C-25-35

NEED TO KNOW
She was the woman being whipped by Britney Spears in her new music video "Work Bitch".

RISE TO FAME
Professional Ballerina in Miami and New York City.

UNEXPECTED
She has a tiny birthmark on her right arm.

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Natalia Barulich

She may have been whipped by Britney Spears, but we have nothing but good intentions for this Wolverine loving brunette beauty.

WE'RE SURE YOU GOT EVERYTHING YOU WISHED FOR DURING THE HOLIDAYS, BUT IF YOU HAD YOUR "GEEK" GIFT WISH, WHAT WOULD BE AT THE TOP OF YOUR LIST?

I love traveling, so the best geek gift I could ever receive would have to be a teleporter like the one in Star Trek. I could go anywhere at any time.

EXCELLENT CHOICE! SO NEXT YEAR, IT WOULD BE A GOOD IDEA TO SIT ON SANTA'S LAP AND ASK NICELY. WHAT DID YOU ASK FOR THIS YEAR?

[For] Superman to fly me to all my auditions so I could ditch the constant LA traffic!

SO SUPERMAN IS #1 ON YOUR LIST?

Wolverine! Because Hugh Jackman is a sexy beast and one of my favorite male actors.

EVEN WE HAVE TO ADMIT HUGH JACKMAN IS ONE OF OUR FAVORITE CASTINGS TOO. ARE YOU INTO THE "BIG BRUTE" TYPE?

I'm completely attracted to nerdy men, intelligence is a big turn on.

YOU'VE GOT OUR ATTENTION. GO ON...

A great smile, someone who's passionate and genuine. Nice arms don't hurt either. I can usually pick up on a person's intensions pretty quickly. Nothing is sexier than being yourself... Unless you can be Batman, always be Batman.

photographs by **KYLE GOLDIE**
produced by **FREMAVI STUDIOS**

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GYK

Girl You Know
JANUARY 2014
PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOSE LUIS

PAULINA SATIVA

Born in Stockholm, Sweden - Resides in Huston, TX, USA
Fashion Merchandising Student
"I'm not what-you-see-is-what-you-get. I'm so much more."

IT'S EVERY MAN'S FANTASY TO HAVE A WOMAN LIKE YOU WALKING AROUND IN LINGERIE. WE HOPE YOU'RE READY TO REVEAL YOUR GEEKIER SIDE.
I'm the biggest comic nerd ever. My favorites are Superman, [tv's] Heroes and X-men, but it all started by watching Smallville as a child. I have always been fascinated with people with superpowers and wish I had one too. I wish that I could fly or had a healing power.

DO YOU HAVE A FAVORITE SUPERHERO?
My favorite superhero is Lois Lane as Superwoman.

NICE REFERENCE. WHAT ARE YOU INTO WHEN YOU'RE NOT READING ALL-STAR SUPERMAN #2?
I love to exercise, read, party, travel... driving at very high speed. Its against the law, I know, but you have done it too. It makes me feel untouchable!

A LADY WHO LIKES TO DRIVE IN THE FAST LANE, READ SUPERMAN COMICS AND WEAR WHITE LINGERIE AROUND THE HOUSE. WE'RE STUNNED!
I'm not what-you-see-is-what-you-get. I'm so much more.

WE'RE ON BOARD. WHAT TYPE OF GUY IS YOUR SPEED?
In a guy, I like a sense of humor and a positive outlook on life. I have a little bit of a fetish for overconfident guys as well.

OVERCONFIDENT? SOUNDS MORE LIKE THE FLASH TO US, BUT WE'LL TAKE IT. IF WE FIT THE CRITERIA, WHAT KEEPS US IN LINE FOR DATE #2?
To get a second date, i think it is important to be decisive. Don't say things like " I don't know, what do you think?" or " It's up to you." I like a confident guy. It is also important to eat like a normal person and behave like a gentleman. Be yourself and have a sense of humor and don't only talk about yourself all night. Tell me funny stories and joke around.

IT DEFINITELY SOUNDS LIKE YOU'RE A FLASH KINDA LADY OR MAYBE KYLE RAYNER AS GREEN LANTERN. AS WE IMAGINE YOU IN A SWEATER SO WE CAN FOCUS, TELL US MORE ABOUT YOU.
I have the typical sexy blonde Swedish girl look but when you get to know me I'm super geeky and I love to discuss fantasy stuff. I want to be the kind of woman that makes other women want to be like me and I think to be that you have to be yourself; to have confidence and to stand up for who you are and what you like.

YOU'RE SOUNDING A LOT LIKE WONDER WOMAN. SEEMS TO US LIKE YOU'RE SIMILAR TO YOUR FAVORITE SUPERHERO, AND THAT'S INCREDIBLY SEXY.

You can call me a nerd or intellectual, diverse and gifted because that is, for me, what a real nerd is.

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"I THINK IT'S IMPORTANT TO BE DECISIVE. I LIKE A CONFIDENT GUY. BE YOURSELF AND HAVE A SENSE OF HUMOR. TELL ME FUNNY STORIES AND JOKE AROUND."

#FOLLOW PAULINA
@PaulinaSativa

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REVIEW

NLM GETS IN-DEPTH WITH REVIEWS OF THREE MARVEL COMICS

INFINITY #6
AVENGERS ARENA #18
X-MEN: BATTLE OF THE ATOM
ATTACK OF THE CLONES

WRITTEN BY LANCE PAUL

X-MEN: BATTLE OF THE ATOM ATTACK OF THE CLONES

Next Level has been missing some quite "Marvelous" things lately, and for all you non-True Believers, the truth is: I have been missing my geek readers just as much. Get ready for it. Your favorite Apostle is back! Sure, it's been a couple of months, but I'm jumping right into the heat of things with a rip-roaring, cluster-frack of creators and mutant family reunions with the closing of the X-Men wide-line event, Battle of the Atom.

After 10 issues, Battle of the Atom has come to a close, and this geeked-out writer is left wanting more. This final issue is a bit of a twister with a solicited Brian Michael Bendis/ Frank Cho tag-team; but in actuality, BOTA #2 turned into a Jason Aaron-penned romp with more artists to shake a stick at. Who knows what kind of last-minute editorial hiccups caused this catastrophe. As most Marvel crossovers go, this one started off with a bang and had its share of high points over the 2-month period. Two moments that stuck out for yours truly over the past week: the strange evolution of Bobby Drake, as he molded from Ice Hulk to Gandolf the Iceman, and the needed evolution of the All-New X-Men (a.k.a. the original X-babies), who went from mere plot devices to now fully developed, enjoyable characters. Thank God for that.

Though, unfortunately, like most X-crossovers in the current comic decade, the few high points certainly didn't make up for the low. I wonder if those raving cheers from New York Comic-Con would have remained after the penultimate and finale issues.

This crazy ride (through nine previous issues) saw five different groups of X-Men from three different time periods all duking it out for the age old time travel comic conundrum. If my past self comes to present time and then stays for future time but kills a past person.. err, mutant.. who was needed for a future endeavor... You get the picture! Like most X-events, time travel plays the hugely fracked up portion of the play, but the timing couldn't have been worse coming off the heels of the Age of Ultron debacle. Before BOTA #2, the story had thus far centered on the need to send the original team of displaced X-Men back home due to a future catastrophe (president-in-waiting Dazzler is killed... I can't make this up!) they caused that disrupted the time stream. A confusing stretch? Well, it wouldn't be the X-Men, now, would it...

Even so, The Battle of the Atom could have been told over a lot less issues and tie-ins. We know Bendis writes the majority of the books, and that both Aaron and Brian Wood are terrific writers in their own right. The art was extraordinarily good throughout, too. Fans will be pleased — and have been pleased — that this was an improvement over Schism and.. cough.. Regenesis. But, who remembers the glory days of Days of Future Past? I know every writer working today does (and everyone else wants to, because of the looming Bryan Singer film). What seperates those X-stories of lore and the NOW!

> **After 10 issues, Battle of the Atom has come to a close, and this geeked-out writer is left wanting more.**

I mean, Future Past was two issues long (Uncanny X-Men #141 & #142)! Back to the Atom at hand, Part 9 (a.k.a. Wolverine & The X-Men #37) witnessed an "all-friendly, peace-loving" S.H.I.E.L.D. launching hundreds of missiles — plus a few sentinels — at our ancestral/ incestuous Mutant tango party. A 3-way battle ensues. And like most things dealing with triplets, individuals are forgotten in the chaos. I give Jason Aaron credit for making the story flow with more than 30 characters, as it's no wonder there's a sense of forgetfulness when it comes to individuals. This hodgepodge of mutants leaves any forward momentum and emotional development hanging at page one, and later rushed into four epilogues. Throughout this massive final issue (a.k.a. X-Men: Battle of the Atom #2) numerous deaths happen, but, not surprisingly, these consequences will likely mean nothing to comic readers since the perished individuals were no more than throwaway characters.

I ask, what's the point of a story that changes everything, if nothing emotional happens besides pointless characters with little page time dying, and, perhaps even worse, some odd team switching?

> **...Battle of the Atom is an event worth reading, if not collecting.**

As far as the overall appearance of the series is concerned, BOTA is as pretty as an X-women swimsuit photoshoot. It's just a low down dirty shame then, that the final few issues saw numerous talented artists rushed into the fray.. amuck all the madness. Some of the piecemealed work does look outstanding. Both Chris Bachalo and Stuart Immonen should have finished the book on their own, too, considering their work stood out like Beast with a ram horn (deadlines... it's a killer!). Seeing how these studs were relegated to the back epilogues, this stickler for continuity can't help but blame The House that Professor X built for dropping the ball with placing all the numerous roosters in the hen house. Costume inaccuracies happen more frequently than the Bieber on date night. From page to page, characters had different outfits mysteriously appear on their bodies with no continuity from the prior panels. Even when Magik is turned all hoofed demon, she magically returns to normal a panel later with no explanation.

But, you know what, comicworms? Even with all of its blunders, Battle of the Atom is an event worth reading, if not collecting. The beginning stands out for its cool portrayal of the Original 6. The All-New X-Men actually mean something, and for that daring notion, Bendis deserves much credit. But, of course, once the crossover became a royal rumble of mutant clones, the story couldn't help but feel bloated within its own grandeur. Still, if BotA doesn't stand a mutant chance of testing time like its predecessors, Mutant Massacre, Age of Apocalypse, or Days of Future Past — and its meandering mid-event sequence of no more than talking heads — the start and the end were strong enough for a solid recommendation. Even if the event itself leads to yet... another.

[L AND R] COMIC BOOK COVER CREDIT: MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT I ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

INFINITY #6 OF 6
ALMOST INHUMAN

As one Marvel event closes, another always blossoms.

At 44-pages, Infinity is one credible finale, thanks to the eye-pretty art of Jim Cheung (X-Force, Young Avengers) and Dustin Weaver (S.H.I.E.L.D.), and the year-long crafted mind of Jonathan Hickman (Fantastic Four, God is Dead). Issue #6 finishes the story of Thanos' thirst for prolicide with the final vestige of his legacy. Somewhat. As the NLM aficionado of all things Marvel, your favorite writer was extremely happy with Infinity overall. And though it lacks a clear finish line, at least there weren't 15-pages of All-New Marvel NOW! previews. There were a couple.

Looking back, Hickman's solo event (there were tie-in's, but all you ever really needed was the main story, The Avengers, and New Avengers) had plenty of dynamic moments, thankfully many of them in this issue to close an epic tale. Who doesn't remember the Mjolnir-sledging Thor splatter/slaughter a Builder? Or Inhuman King Black Bolt's vocal cords destroying the floating city with a simple "NO!"? Moments like these made up for the stop-gap feel of a usual Marvel crossover.

At only 6-issues, Infinity does suffer from a discontinuous tale, however, often trying to find its own footing with both themes of intergalactic Builder control and Thanos' separate blockade of Earth. Either of these two stories could have stood on their own and left a telling mark on the House that Stan built. By combining them though, the overall arc never really had its proper time to shine, and by the end felt rushed.

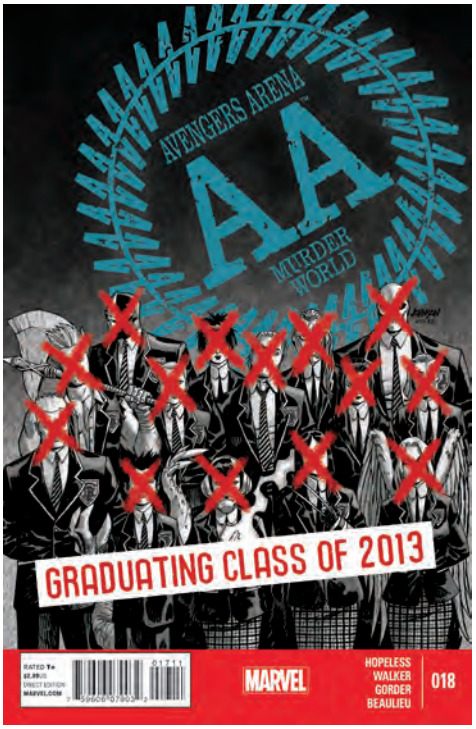
My chief concern with most Marvel crossovers is that epic stories are laid...and then scurried so the Previews books can be written. On to the next one, I guess. In the final issue, Captain Universe neatly cleans up the whole Builder storyline with your typical deus ex machina. A battle with this much on the line should never be so simple. And, you'd think, with a good portion of the current Marvel audience — because of the movies — just getting to know Ms. Universe, that further exploration would be required.

Yet, while there's some "hate" for Marvel's knack for continuous storytelling, there's no question Hickman surpasses any previous company crossover in some time. Hickman's plot, even if rushed by editorial, was clearly well thought-out, provided plenty of entertainment, and did its damnedest not to leave any loose ends. The final issue doesn't hold back, either. We see an Earth under siege by Thanos; a knock out/drag out battle with an Avengers-led Captain America against the Mad Titan, and the Illuminati's efforts to shut down Thanos's General, Supergiant. Throughout Infinity #6, Hickman allows each of the heavy-hitters their proper time of shine, to boot, and even makes room for newly minted Hyperion to have quite the smashing spread.

With that said, a proper review couldn't have been written without mention of Jimmy Cheung's talented pencil work. May it be the quietest of moments, or the most epic of battles filled with super-hero grandeur, The Children's Crusader artist looks comfortable with any page. And no other time since the end of the credits in The Avengers has Thanos looked more massive and intimidating, or Cap and the Hulk appear more imposing. You always know a Cheung drawn comic will deliver even if the story is lacking (or taking a wee bit long to finish, like he often does). The immensely talented Weaver contributes needed additional pages for the Illuminati story, while Justin Ponsor and Ive Svorcina paint a dynamic color scheme that add to the gorgeous layouts. Not to forget, Hickman and Cheung's story gained plenty of letter support from the talented Chris Elipoulos. Hickman's tenure on Avengers had already seized my attention with his "world building" abilities, and his first crossover, Infinity, continues that sweeping notion. Even if the event isn't perfect, you can bet the Marvel Universe is in a much better place than it had been in prior crossovers (cough, cough.. Age of Ultron). In future months, the repercussions of Black Bolt and Maximus' titanic tussle will be felt with Inhumanity: a blank slate of new possibilities with Thane (Thanos's son), as the MU is back to its full galactic potential with the Skrull and Kree Empire's return to dominance.

And if this becomes the motivation for Avengers 3, then look the f$%& out!

AVENGERS ARENA #18



Not to be outdone (other than in terms of sales, of course), Avengers Arena #18 finishes one of Marvel's most epic and out-of-the-box stories for years. I jumped on the bandwagon with issue one and have loved every turn of this deathly roller coaster. This series brought back both obscure and current characters and gave them all equal story time. With meaningful deaths and new characters that I've quickly grown to love, your Apostle looks forward to where Dennis Hopeless takes the surviving characters' next step. Expect nothing but a very unique and villainous direction this March.

With Avengers Arena, Hopeless showed us what would happen if Marvel was a Game of Hunger, a story of what happens when people — in this case teenagers, of course — are pushed to the brink beyond the emotional and deathly choices they must make to stay alive. The best part of this issue was with the letter at the end, which tells us that Dennis never wanted to make a Royal knock-off, that he had a teen story planned all along. Marvel urged him to "chase fire" in reference to Hollywood, and, boy, did it pay off in spades. Here's to you Hopeless, for giving us a story that ranks on this Marvel fan's all-time list.

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EPIC COSPLAYER

KatyBEaR

COSPLAY CITY
Phoenix, AZ, USA

COSPLAY HISTORY
Since 2011

Where to see Katybear next:

The Amazing Arizona
Comic Con
Phoenix, AZ
January 24-26, 2014

The life of a Cosplayer is never easy but know this: It is an epic quest, not only to find perfection in the details, but a journey to bring the characters only seen before in art and animation to life. It is midnight sewing groups, hours of dry-time, bloody pin-pricked fingertips, glue, leather, metal work, illumination and more, just to walk through the massive doors of the grand convention hall and have the eyes of your peers gravitate like magnets to your epic Cosplay costume and ask: "How did you do that?"

コスプレ

Katybear1031

@Katybear

@KatybearCosplay

WorldMags.net

Black Cat

MARVEL COMICS

by Katybear

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **HOPE AXELSON**

WHAT DIFFICULTIES HAVE YOU RUN INTO AS YOU'VE BECOME PART OF THE COSPLAY WORLD?

Dealing with drama. I try to live above it, but sometimes it just creeps into my life. I have zero tolerance for it and I will drop you immediately if you cause drama. It's supposed to be about fun, not who is better and who has won more awards.

NLM INTERVIEW KATYBEAR

NLM We have to know what first inspired you to get into the world of Cosplay?

KB I have always loved dressing up. I was born on Halloween. I actually didn't know about Cosplay until about 2 1/2 years ago and immediately started doing it once I found out about it.

NLM Born on Halloween? Pretty cool! Is there a favorite Cosplayer on your list?

KB I would say that my favorite Cosplayer is a three-way tie between Enji Knight, Kamui Cosplay, and Lightning Cosplay.

NLM We would love to know all the details about how you construct all of your amazing costumes. Would you tell us?

KB At this time I make all my armor from craft foam, Mod Podge (a type of glue) and acrylic paint. I want to try using Worbla because it looks amazing and is more durable. I sew all my other stuff, and I usually make boot covers to make my boots look just like the character. I have made a few hats (for my USO Girl, Cammy, and Harley Quinn). I am self-taught, so I am still improving, but I think I've come a long way.

NLM For being on your own, you've done an incredible job! Do you have a favorite?

KB My favorite at this moment is either Supergirl, Cammy, or my brand new one Harley Quinn (I just did a photoshoot of her and am going to debut her at Albuquerque Comic Con).

NLM Do you compete?

KB The only competition that I really care to mention is Otaku House Cosplay Idol. It's a competition that involves Cosplayers from all over the world. I have placed in the top 10 in the North America category two years in a row, and I am currently in the lead at the time of this interview. It's based on craftsmanship.

NLM Anything you think a novice should know?

KB I am still fairly new at this and I know I will always have more to learn. I would not be where I am without the fans, and I will never forget that.

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CAMMY
STREET FIGHTER
by Katybear

GIVE US A 2014 KATYBEAR COSPLAY PREVIEW: WHAT CAN WE LOOK FORWARD TO?

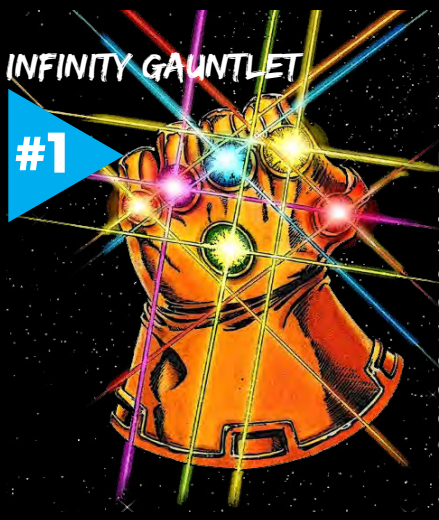
I am currently working on two Pokemon gijinkas. One is Braixen and one is a Gardevoir inspired gown. I am also planning on making a Blood Elf Hunter and Alleyne from Queensblade.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **ADAM PATRICK MURRAY**

TOP 10 FANTASY TOY LIST

We are sure Santa was kind to all of you this past holiday season, but there are some gifts that would blow a PS4 and Xbox One out of the water. We started thinking about living in a fantasy world where the Beyonder was Santa and anything was possible. Now, there were some other things that we would have loved to include, like a Tron light cycle perhaps, or maybe a hoverboard from Back to the Future, but we decided to narrow it down to our most epic top ten.

#1 INFINITY GAUNTLET

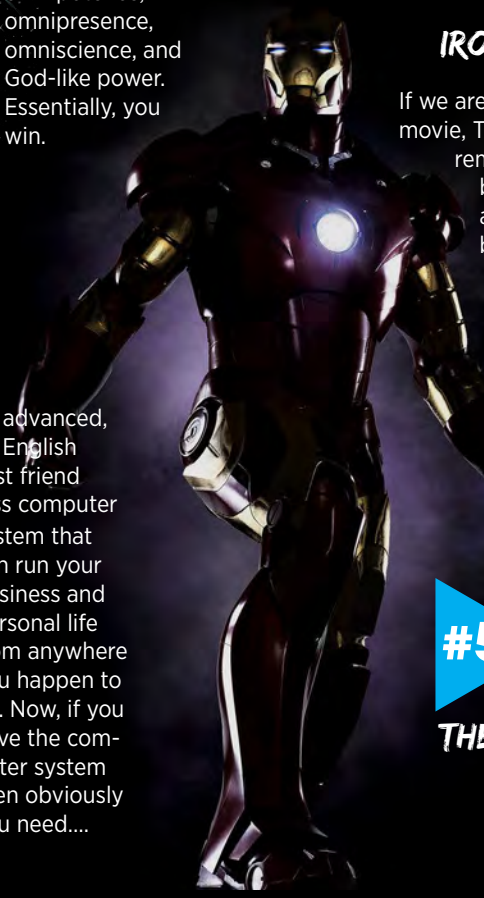


Hmm, let's see. Who wouldn't want to be able to control the time, space, mind, soul, reality, and power gems and all in one spiffy golden glove? With this gauntlet, the wielder gains omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience, and God-like power. Essentially, you win.

#2 MJOLNIR

The power of Thor, in your hands! Flight, summoning the elements of storm (lightning, wind, and rain), opening interdimensional portals, and returning to you after you chuck it at your enemies are some of the highlights of this hammer, forged from a dying star and Asgardian "Uru" metal. If it's good enough for the Gods of Asgard, it's good enough for us.

#4 IRON MAN'S ARMOR



If we are going off of the latest Iron Man movie, Tony Stark has figured out how to remotely have his armor attach to his body so he can suit up at any time, anywhere. Kind of makes it easier to back up all of your drunken bravado at the bar if you can have a repulsor blast to back you up.

We considered the implications of putting two Iron Man items on the list back-to-back, but then we thought... but they're so cool!

#3 JARVIS

A computer system that is so advanced, it can talk smack to you in an English accent. Jarvis can be your best friend while still being your all access computer system that can run your business and personal life from anywhere you happen to be. Now, if you have the computer system then obviously you need....

#5 THE BATMOBILE

There have been many different versions of Batman's main means of transportation, but they have all been covetable. Batman has put in everything from rocket and missile launchers to an actual jet engine in the rear. From the Batmobile Batman can access his Bat-Computer remotely and even send samples to his lab for analyzation. With sleek looks and the best alarm system you can buy, you can be assured to have the safest, sickest ride around.

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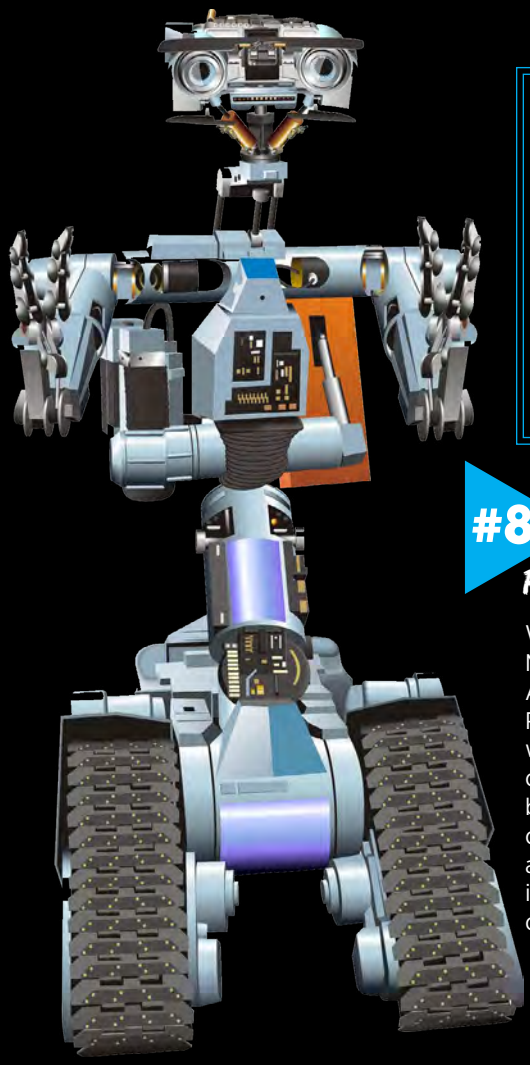
#6 HYPERTIME WATCH

Ever since Jay Garrick first donned the Flash costume, fanboys have wanted to be a part of the Speed Force and zoom around the world. In the movie Clockstoppers, scientist Earl Doppler invented a wristwatch that could do the next best thing; speed up your molecules so it's like time has stopped! Close enough to super speed for us!

#7 T.A.R.D.I.S.

(Time and Relative Dimension in Space)- The sentient time and space travelling ship of Doctor Who may be an "obsolete" model that can't change its outer appearance from the big blue Police Box, but it's still the time traveling device we would want under our tree. Besides, with that kind of power we would need SOMETHING with a conscience to keep us from breaking the universe or something.



We wanted to do an official shout-out to Star Trek. Though there are many movies, comics, and tv shows that have showcased the coolest gadgets around, we feel we need to give a big high-five to Star Trek for not only having some of the coolest gadgets around, but creating so many that have become real man-toys that we use today. It was like the writers could see into the future!

#8 ROBOT SIDEKICK

We don't care if it's R2D2, Mega Man, Johnny 5, or even Alpha 5 from the Power Rangers, we have ALWAYS wanted to have a robot to call our own. They could be awesome killing machines like Gundams or just a glorified robot butler like in I Robot as long as it was cybertronic and ours.

#9 LIGHTSABER

There are numerous swords and sword types out there in the geek universe but ever since George Lucas changed our lives and geek movies forever we have wanted, nay, NEEDED lightsabers. Able to slice through essentially any surface without much resistance and glowing with brilliant colors ranging from classic Jedi blue to the sinister red glow of the Sith, you would be hard pressed to find a more formidable weapon.

Do you think we missed a seriously epic man-toy? Let us know all about what you would put in your TOP 10 List! Visit us on Facebook or Tweet us!

#TOPFANTASYTOY

#10 TRANSPORTER

(Star Trek)- "Beam me up Scotty!" Though the phrase was never actually uttered in the shows or movies, we would still want to be able to say it right before being beemed to the local comic shop. Controversial in its practicallity, we definitely prefer this than getting stuck in traffic or watching terrible in-flight movies.

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FEATURE
FA
ARTICLE

NLM presents

THE JUSTICE LEAGUE

WRITTEN BY **MIKE CASALS**
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **MARK WONG**

Three years ago, DC realized that they needed to make a change to bring new readers into their incredibly detailed stories. When the change was announced in 2011, there was an uproar in the **comic geek** community. They were changing our beloved characters, some with over 70 years of history! However, most geeks were overlooking the fact that our heroes' origin stories have been **altered and retconned** so many times before, that the only possible solution would be to start all over again. It seemed as though they believed this would **alleviate the most confusion**, unless you're reading Green Lantern, which is always confusing. The NLM staff decided we would do the legwork in the hopes of reuniting the once **rabid DC fanboys** (and fanladies) to their former passion. So grab your cape and cowl, strap on in and hold on tight, because this is going to be an epic ride from the history of DC Comics through **Flashpoint** into the **DCnU**.

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SUPERMAN

Any and every warm blooded American and beyond knows who Superman is, but do they know his origin story? The story of Kal-El, the orphan child of Jor-El and Lara, is of a baby boy, jettisoned from the dying planet Krypton to give him a chance at life. Kal-El was found by Jonathon and Martha Kent, who raised him as their own, showing him morals and a strong affinity for good. As with all of the other heroes, Superman's origin has altered slightly throughout the years. The most notable differences have been in his youth. The original story has the Kent's showing Clark the rocket he arrived in, revealing his alien heritage. He then donned the tights and cape at a young age and adventured as Superboy, later meeting the Legion of Superheroes, a team of heroes from the 30th Century who were inspired by his efforts as Superman. An example of one of the large changes was having Lex Luthor, Superman's greatest adversary, be one of Clark's childhood friends, an idea that was brought into the television show Smallville. In the new 52, Jonathon and Martha Kent died when he was a teenager. We could continue with more storylines, but let's move on.

A well-known plot point for Superman is his love interest with the star reporter from the Daily Planet: Lois Lane. From the TV shows "The Adventures of Lois and Clark" and "Smallville" to most of the Superman movies and video games, Lois is an integral part of Superman's life and his bond to the human race. Lois was so beloved by fans that she even had her own comic series. The continuity of Lois' character has fluctuated almost as many times as Superman, ranging from the Golden Age damsel in distress to the army brat in the Silver and Modern Age. When the Silver Age began, DC retconned their continuity and split their Universes into the current Universe and a parallel Universe called Earth 2 (no relation to the 1994-95 TV show, which was awesome). Lois' good looks and spunk would get her into a lot of trouble over the years, including being taken hostage on numerous occasions. It hasn't been all-bad for her though. In the storyline of All-Star Superman, a dying Superman gives Lois a "potion of sorts" that gives her powers comparable to his for 24 hours. In that 24 hours, Lois helped stop a monster attack in Metropolis, was courted by Atlas and Samson, and was taken hostage by an Ultra-Sphinx. Not bad for one day. Lois has been a role model for strong, independent women even without her 24-hour power. She has a sense of right and wrong that can rival Superman's and she is not afraid to speak her mind. We can definitely see why Supes fell for her. Superman has had his share of ups and downs in his never-ending battle against evil. The worst, and most memorable, was his death at the hands of the ultimate killing machine, Doomsday. In 1992, DC comics debuted Superman's toughest opponent ever: Doomsday, a rampaging creature created on Superman's home planet of Krypton by a being named Bertron. During it's early years, Krypton was inhabited by the most vicious creatures in the Universe. Bertron's quest to create the ultimate being had

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HOLLY WOLF

Being a Feature in Next Level is already saying something about your level of "geekdom" but we have never encountered a professional model with such a deep obsession with gaming and Superheros!

WE WOULD LOVE TO KNOW WHAT YOU HAVE STAMPED ON YOUR GEEK CARD. GIVE US THE DETAILS!

I love RPG's! if you couldn't tell already, I grew up playing Nintendo as a child and love games like Mario and Super Smash Bro's. I'm also a big fantasy movie geek. Love to read books and go see the latest movies! For 3 years my family would open Christmas presents then go watch LOTR in theatres!

YOU'RE REPRESENTING MANY OF THE JUSTICE LEAGUE. DO YOU HAVE A FAVORITE?
That's a hard one, but I would have to say Batman. Only because the old school Batman comics are hilarious and I love all the villians. Especially the women villains.

DO YOU HAVE ANY "MUST HAVES" THAT YOU CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT?
Well first off Zelda and the Final Fantasy series. I go crazy whenever a new game comes out and nerd out all by myself. Secondly there's a series called the Legend Of Drizzt that I love. I have read the books several times. Its a series about dark elves. By far my favourite books. Lastly I would have to say Korean Pop Music. I listen to that stuff all day long.

WE CAN'T IMAGINE YOU WITH ANY OTHER TYPE OF GUY THAN ONE WITH A GEEK EDGE, BUT MAYBE YOU'RE INTO NERDY GUYS TOO. IS THAT YOUR TYPE?

Be a nerd. Cuz I love them! I love guys who I can nerd out with, so someone who can do that with me I will easily chill with. Being Asian helps a lot.. I have a thing for Asians.

ASIAN, CHECK. NERDING OUT ON THE COUCH, PERFECT. IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE ON YOUR LIST?
Muscles. I love a gorgeous toned man. Someone who's funny and I can laugh with, and I'm not gonna say the last one, just that i don't have it.

BOOM! CAN'T FIGHT THAT. IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE ABOUT YOURSELF THAT YOU THINK WE SHOULD KNOW?
I am a well versed nerdy hot Blonde who loves posing in Lingerie and Bikinis! I've been featured in international Playboy's and FHM, and just love to have a good time travelling and going to comic conventions!

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **MARK WONG**

#FOLLOW HOLLY WOLF

@HollyWolf

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him placing a baby in the middle of this toxic world and watching it die over and over again. The remains of the baby were cloned to create a stronger life form that could survive whatever killed it last. Darwin eat your heart out! Essentially, Bertron was using cloning to hyper evolve the perfect uber-creature and successful he was. The creature killed every living thing on Krypton, including Bertron. To describe Doomsday, imagine the look of a grey Abomination (Marvel) with debatably more strength than The Hulk (Marvel) with a predisposed nature to eliminate all life. This mindless killing machine made his way from planet to planet until finally being defeated by The Radiant and placed in a casket that was shot into space. Unfortunately, he crashed deep into Earth and eventually broke himself out (greaaaaat). After paving a path of death and destruction, he came to fight Superman. In a battle that spanned over states (literally), both Superman and Doomsday eventually let loose with their haymakers and finished each other off in a permanent way. "Funeral for a Friend" was an event throughout the DC Universe, showing the impact of Superman's life and death. (This was major, folks). After a large debacle including clones (Superboy), cyborgs (Hank Henshaw), and men made of steel (Steel, John Henry Irons), the original Superman was brought back from "near death" by the Eradicator, an ancient artifact of Krypton that took humanoid form after the "death" of Superman. He lives.

In Kingdom Come, we are shown just how much Superman can influence his peers. Set in the future, Superman has given up on the human race, living a life of solitude. He felt as if the world had moved on without him and that he was no longer the Man of Tomorrow. His fellow heroes, all aged appropriately, follow his example and retire alongside him. After Kansas and most of the breadbasket of the US was decimated in a nuclear explosion caused by the new brand of heroes, Superman comes back to action. Some of the new class of heroes fall into line at the mere sight of the Man of Steel whereas others take a little... persuading.

Kingdom Come is also the first time we see Wonder Woman and Superman really romantically linked. In the DCnU, the two hit it off and thus the power couple is born! DC is taking their love seriously and even gave them their own series entitled Superman/Wonder Woman to tell the story of their union. You would think that everyone would love the fact that these two are together, or at the very least would keep quiet if they didn't, but that isn't the case. The Gods voice their opinions, declaring Superman is not worthy to be Diana's companion. (Yeah, major drama). Their solution is to force Superman to make him prove himself in combat! As you guessed, he succeeded. The champion couple have the greatest of foes to face for they are two of the most powerful figures in the DCnU.

Superman has always been inspiring readers to do the right thing, showing them a strong sense of morality since his appearance in 1938 and we all hope to always have the Big Blue Boy Scout around to fight for truth, justice, and the American way for many years to come.

AQUAMAN

The King of the Seven Seas first appeared in More Fun Comics #73 in November 1941. Whereas some of the other heroes in the Justice League have had their backstories changed repeatedly, Aquaman's has very few fluctuations. Here's the basic idea: his mother was Atlanna, Queen of

Atlantis and his father was either a lighthouse keeper named Tom Curry or the wizard Atlan, depending on Golden or Silver Age storylines. As a baby, he was abandoned and left to die because of his blonde hair, being that there was a curse involved and the king was a brunette, if you get our drift. He survived the attempted murder and raised himself in the ocean with only the creatures of the sea to keep him company. He eventually grew up on land after being taken in by a lighthouse keeper named Arthur Curry who (very creatively) named him Arthur Curry. In his travels, he fell in love with a woman named Kako. He also ended up meeting (and pissing off) the future Ocean Master, an evil sorcerer who just so happens to be Aquaman's half brother "from another mother."

Aquaman's real name is Orin, but he chooses to go by both Orin and Arthur depending on the different tenures with the Justice League. Speaking of the Justice League, Aquaman actually was in charge of his own Justice League comprised of Aquaman, Elongated Man, Gypsy, Martian Manhunter, Steel, Vibe, Vixen and Zatanna. He only stayed for about a year before he resigned his position to work on his marriage with his wife Mera, who had been driven crazy by the death of their son, Arthur Jr. On top of his son being killed, Orin lost his hand to piranhas when he had his telepathic control of sea life taken away by Charybdis. He quickly replaced his lost hand with a harpoon spearhead, (awesome choice) which was then replaced with a cybernetic prosthetic, (even cooler) which was later replaced by a new hand made of mystical water with "unusual properties." Needless to say, Aquaman has had more than a few reboots and creative teams of his own.

In the time just before the New 52 relaunch of DC comics, Aquaman managed to get sent back in time, captured by his own people, turned into living water, imprisoned in an ornamental pool, gone missing, DIED, reanimated with a Black Lantern ring, and then brought back to life, hands and all. In the New 52, though even the civilians joke that he has as much power as a gold fish, Aquaman is not someone to pick a fight with. He still has super strength, speed, and agility, and he's no joke if you dare take him on in water. All hail to the King of Atlantis!

MARTIAN MAN HUNTER

J'onn J'onzz was first introduced to the DC Universe back in 1953 in Detective Comics #225 as the result of an experiment by Dr. Saul Erdel. Dr. Erdel was trying to build a device that would allow humans to contact and communicate with beings from other planets, but his device worked far better than he had ever imagined! So much was the shock that the good doctor suffered a heart attack at the sight of the 6'7'' Manhunter from Mars and died, stranding J'onn on Earth. Throughout his time here, J'onn adopted many different aliases as his Martian biology allowed him to shape-shift, including his clothing, with his most notable namesake being Detective John Jones.

But let's slow down and start from the beginning. J'onn's story has been a tragic one from the start. His twin brother Ma'alefa'ak got the short end of the stick and was born without the Martian's innate ability to communicate telepathically. Obviously that would lead to problems later. In adulthood, J'onn became a police officer and found the love of his life in a Martian woman named M'yri'ah. J'onn and M'yriah had built a modest home for themselves and even had a baby girl named K'hym.

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As we all know, jealousy leads to anger, anger leads to hate, hate leads to... you know the rest... J'onn's brother was so overcome with his envy that he began to despise all of Martian culture. He plotted to commit Martian genocide via a contagious virus that targeted the telepathic energy they used to communicate. The virus used the Martians inherent fear of fire, causing them psychosomatic stress so intense that their minds and bodies would actually burst into flame! Sadly all of J'onn's family died and J'onn's psyche was so shattered that he nearly lost his mind. May we note that this is totally mind-blowingly f#cked up. This is as mentally scarring as a Korean horror movie. Seriously.

On the bright side, J'onn has a plethora of amazing powers that could even rival Superman's! As a Martian, he was gifted with advanced telepathic abilities, shape, size, and phase-shifting, "Martian Vision", flight, density control, super-human speed, strength and endurance. He even has freeze breath (which is awesome)! Another interesting power he has is his ability to regenerate himself. There was even an occasion where he had to regenerate his whole body from just his head!

In the New 52, this jolly green powerhouse is part of a team called Stormwatch. Stormwatch is a group of warriors that protects Earth in more of a "professional" manner (Punisher style). His backstory has also become slightly muddled as some stories have Mars completely populated and happy and others have the gruesome version. Regardless of his past, the Martian Manhunter is definitely a force to be reckoned with in the DC Universe.

BATMAN

The Dark Knight Detective was first introduced to comic readers in Detective Comics #27 way back in 1939. Unless you've been living in the Phantom Zone, you know his back-story, but just incase you were banished, we'll help you out. Young Bruce Wayne went to a showing of "The Mark of Zorro" with his family and was walking home through an alley (asking for it) when they were mugged. Both Thomas and Martha Wayne were brutally killed in front of little Bruce's eyes. As he watched them lower his parents into the ground, he made the vow that would take over his entire life.

The reasons as to why Bruce's parents were killed and who killed them have had some inconsistencies. Most of the stories have the murderer as Joe Chill. Second place would go to "just some punk with a gun." In an interesting twist in the series Flashpoint, the alternate timeline had Bruce dying in the alley and his parents surviving. His father Thomas took on the Mantle of the Bat while Martha actually had a mental breakdown and became The Joker. M Night Shamalan, eat your heart out! The twists keep on coming as Thomas discovers his son was supposed to live and should have become The Batman! In one final little twist, after telling Martha their son was supposed to live, her sanity began to return. When she discovers Bruce should have become Batman, she loses all grasp on reality and falls to her death in the same hole that Bruce fell into when he was first frightened by the bats in his youth.

TRIVIA: The stars of the "The Mark of Zorro" have changed throughout the years including the 1920's version starring Douglas Fairbanks, the 1940's version starring Tyrone Power, and an amalgamation starring a fake actor named Tyrone Fairbanks.

Batman himself has also changed many times over the years. The Caped Crusader started off in a dark pulp style, killing and maiming with little remorse for his actions. This all changed 11 issues later in Detective Comics #38 with the appearance of Robin. Along with Robin, the end of World War II brought on a more lighthearted, juvenile fantasy approach to the books with Batman being more of a paternal figure and less of the vigilante in "the bleak and menacing world."

There have been a few different men under the cape and cowl including former Boy Wonder turned Nightwing: Dick Grayson, as well as a schizophrenic named Jean-Paul Valley who filled in briefly for Bruce after Bane broke his back. Interestingly enough, although no one can physically see Batman's face under the cowl, the people who know him best, on both sides of the law, can tell when someone different has taken the mantle; most notably, Catwoman and the Joker. In DC's New 52, Bruce Wayne is the only Batman with Dick Grayson returning to his Nightwing persona.

The stories in the New 52 concerning Batman seem to be darker than they were before. The new Joker was revealed with his face surgically removed (his idea) by the Dollmaker only to have it put back in place with wires stretching it across his face. (Super creepy). Batman's son Damian Wayne was also killed brutally by his own clone, going by the name of The Heretic, by stabbing him through the heart. The newest event to hit the DC universe is titled Forever Evil. The Crime Syndicate, an alternate worlds version of the Justice League, captures Nightwing and reveals his identity to the world. Whatever Universe he is in or whichever Bat suit he is wearing, The Dark Knight is feared and respected throughout the world and even parts of the Universe.

THE FLASH

Ever want to run away from your problems? How about running away from your problems at the speed of sound and beyond? That's just another day in the life of The Flash, The Fastest Man Alive. Oh, and by the way, he hasn't even broken a sweat yet. As most of the other superheroes who have been around since the 1940's, there have been a few different Scarlet Speedsters.

The first Flash was Jason "Jay" Garrick. His origin story is kind of weak as far as Superhero stories go. He was working in his lab and fell asleep, inhaled hard (retconned to 'heavy') water vapors that gave him superhuman speed and equally fast reflexes. That's it. Pause for effect. They tried to fix and/or explain it later by stating that the vapors activated a "latent metagene" but it's still pretty sad. Weak origin aside, Jay Garrick was one of the oldest active Superheroes as well as one of the most respected. He fought alongside his friend Alan Scott in the Justice Society of America as well as fighting alongside the other heroes of Earth against impossible odds on numerous occasions. Jay married his long time girlfriend Joan and helped train Bart Allen, the young hero from the future named Impulse.

In the New 52 Universe, the story is a little different. Jay Garrick is a young man fresh out of college and contemplating life on a hill after his girlfriend Joan just dumped him. As he is contemplating life, a meteor crashes into the hill. As it turns out, the meteor was actually the God Mercury. Mercury was dying and could see the potential greatness in Jay so he imbued him with his powers before his death.

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The second Flash was the team member who had all of the crazy continuity changes. His name is Barry Allen. Barry was a police scientist who was hit by a lightning bolt in his lab and gained the Flash's power. Allen has saved the Universe more than a handful of times, even sacrificing his own life during the Crisis on Infinite Earths. (That was a big deal). Barry's selflessness and courage gave him a spot in the Justice League as a founding member.

The third Flash was the nephew of Barry Allen's wife Iris West named Wally West. Teenage Wally was visiting Barry's Central City police lab when he was bathed in the same electrically charged chemicals that gave Barry his super speed and Kid Flash was born! As the Kid Flash, Wally helped form the Teen Titans as well as the New Teen Titans. After Barry Allen's demise at the hands of the Anti-Monitor, Wally took his place in the Justice League. There are many people who would argue that Wally is the greatest Flash but that debate is for another article, which we WILL address in the future. (Let the heated debate begin).

The last man to take on the responsibility of the Flash is Bart Allen, the grandson of Barry Allen. His Grandma Iris brought Bart from the future because he had an illness that caused him to age at an accelerated rate (it's a complicated story). Wally helped him overcome his illness and named him Impulse. After a few years of heroics under that name, a bullet to the kneecap from Deathstroke took Bart out of the hero game for a bit. In that time, he read every book in the San Francisco Public Library and took up the name Kid Flash. Fast-forward (pun intended) a short while to Superboy-Prime who attacked Superboy (Conner Kent) and killed civilians and Titans alike. Bart, Jay Garrick, and Wally West teamed up to throw Superboy-Prime into the Speed Force but Jay couldn't keep up and Wally turned into pure energy and disappeared. Shortly after, a man in a Flash costume showed up in Tokyo, warning about Superboy-Prime's return. It was revealed that the man was actually Bart Allen aged four years! Sadly, Bart was killed in action not too long after. (Once again, if this is confusing, we understand, and agree).

Though there were many men that have been the Flash, Barry Allen was chosen by DC to be the only Flash in The New 52 DCU. He is no longer married or with Iris. Instead, he is in a relationship with a woman named Patty Spivot. As a member of the new Justice League, he represents the speedsters of the DCU as the fastest man alive.

WONDER WOMAN

Beautiful as Aphrodite, wise as Athena, the strength of Hercules, and as swift as Hermes, Princess Diana of Themyscira is better known to Patriarch's World as Wonder Woman. Her mother, Queen Hippolyta, was instructed to mold some clay from the shores of Paradise Island into the form of a baby girl, which was then given life by six members of the Greek Pantheon. Each member blessed her with the gift of an attribute: Demeter gave her great strength, Athena gave her wisdom and courage, Artemis gave her a hunter's heart and communication to animals, Aphrodite gave her beauty and a loving heart, Hestia gave her sisterhood with fire, and Hermes gave her speed and flight.

A United States intelligence officer named Steve Trevor crashed onto Paradise Island. It was decided that an Amazon champion would be chosen to bring him back to Man's

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World and fight evil, which at that time was the Nazis. Queen Hippolyta forbade her daughter from participating in the contest but as children do, Diana disobeyed, won the contest and earned the right to leave Paradise Island. To aid her on her quest, Diana was given both the Lasso of Truth and the Sandals of Hermes. The Lasso had many magical properties including being indestructible and forcing anyone caught in it to tell the absolute truth. The Sandals allowed Diana to instantly traverse great distances in seconds.

In her time before the New 52, when Wonder Woman was not battling alongside the Justice League, she would typically be pitted against magical demons or villains of mythology. She actually has died in battle on a few different occasions and has been granted new life by the Gods. On one occasion she died and stayed dead as the Goddess of Truth and her mother Hippolyta became Wonder Woman. After being returned to Earth, Diana regained her title as Wonder Woman, though after her mother had grown accustomed to the title, they began to fight. Tragically, their issues were never resolved as Hippolyta died in an intergalactic war, defending not only the Earth but the entire Universe.

The artwork in the Our Worlds at War event, in our opinion, was some of the best ever done. Ed McGuinness, you're the man.

Following the conclusion of the Imperiex War, a new story immerged when Wonder Woman killed the villain Maxwell Lord to stop his mind control of Superman. Diana is not a cold-blooded killer but she is an Amazon warrior who will take a life if she sees no other alternative. Desperate for a way to stop the mind controlled Superman from killing Batman, Wonder Woman wrapped her lasso around Lord and asked him how to stop the mind control. When he responded that the only way to stop it was to kill him, Diana snapped his neck. Problem? Brother Eye was recording the event on live television. Needless to say, that caused more than a few issues.

In the New 52, Wonder Woman's origin is changed once again. No longer being made from clay, Diana is the daughter of Hippolyta and Zeus. One major change involves Wonder Woman and a certain Man of Steel who become romantically linked and therefore the power couple to be reckoned with. The series writer, Geoff Johns, states however, that their relationship will end badly. Sounds like trouble in Paradise. Dun dun dunnnnnn...

GREEN LANTERN

"In brightest day, in blackest night, no evil shall escape my sight. Let those who worship evil's might, beware my power, Green Lantern's light!".

Ah the mantra of the Green Lantern. Every member of the Corps recites this oath to recharge their power rings before going to protect their respective space sectors. There is one man that goes by the name Green Lantern that does not have such an oath however, and his name is Alan Scott. Alan Scott was a young railroad engineer who just happened to be working on the tracks during a bridge collapse caused by a robbery. A mystical "green flame" covered meteor showed him how to fashion a ring from its metal so as to receive its great power. Scott defeated the robbers and became known as the Green Lantern!

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Due to a lack of popularity, Alan Scott's time as Green Lantern was short lived. His solo comic was cancelled after just 38 issues and he remained out of publication for 12 years. That's not to say he was gone for good as Alan Scott began reappearing in other comics as a guest star, usually visiting from a parallel Universe.

While Scott was out of continuity, there was another Green Lantern that took his place in the DC universe: Hal Jordan. Hal Jordan's entrance brought the Guardians and the rest of the Green Lantern Corps with him. Though Scott and Jordan shared the title, their rings and power had differences. The biggest difference between the two was that Scott's power ring had a weakness to wood, (we're not kidding). It was said to be an incarnation of the strength of "green growing things." Hal Jordan's power ring had a weakness to the color yellow (yep, just the color, so a banana is no good). Since yellow is the color of fear, it is the "mortal enemy" of green, the color of will. After many years of adventuring as the Green Lantern, Hal Jordan went crazy after his home of Coast City was destroyed by Mongul. In his insanity, he sought to rebuild it in his "green image." He attempted to kill most of the Corps including the Guardians and use their power rings. He obviously needed to be stopped so the Guardians forged a new ring and sent it out to Kyle Rayner.

Kyle Rayner was a young freelance photographer who quickly became well accustomed to being a Green Lantern. Unfortunately, the villain named Major Force brutally murdered his girlfriend and shoved her remains into his refrigerator after just one week of being a hero. (Reprehensibly blunt and epically brutal, we're sure you agree). With the Corps and all but one of the Guardians dead, Kyle was frequently trying to figure things out for himself. He became even more isolated after the events of Zero Hour required him to detonate the planet Oa, home of the Guardians and the Corps. Kyle finally did manage to help defeat Hal and became the torchbearer for the new Green Lantern Corps. He also helped Hal redeem himself during the events of Final Night, as the Sun Eater devoured the sun. He found Jordan and convinced him to help stop the Sun Eater and return Earth to its former glory. Hal succeeded but at the cost of his life. After a time altering event, Hal Jordan appeared in the comics once again but as a young man who was ten years from becoming what Jordan became. This version gave Kyle a copy of Hal's ring, which Kyle was able to use to rebuild the Corps. As you can tell, the Green Lantern's story is quite confusing what with all of the space sectors and different people who have used the name. This is all part of the reason why DC revamped their Universe. In the New Universe, Hal is once again the Green Lantern, but definitely not the same as he was before. He is at the mercy of Sinestro, his greatest rival. More confusion abounds but primarily people are just happy to see Hal's familiar face. •

GEEK STYLE

GEEK TO CHIC?

It's hard enough to know how to dress these days. Frankly, most of the styles are so personality specific, if you've got it right, you look like someone else, and it's pissing you off. So how do you combine your NES t-shirt with your date outfit? And what's so wrong with your Superman wallet? It seems close to impossible to merge the geek with the chic but we see it as a challenge that must be conquered! So let's take that pinky-finger to the edge of our mouth, tip our head to the side and "hmmm" with mischievous delight. By Jove, I think we've got it!

CUFF LINKS

Batman Cuff Links
Retail $17.95
LazerCutJewelry.net

The name alone is worth a second look but the price is what convinced us that these were a must have. Granted, cuff links are commonly used for formal events, but why not have these prepped and ready for when that day comes? Laser cut from mirror plastic, these cuff links come in a variety of "themes" including Star Wars, Transformers, Legend of Zelda, Kingdom Hearts and more!

SHIRT

Perhaps the hardest geek-wear item to feature on that rockin' bod of yours is the t-shirt. So how do you sneak a power shirt on for a date night without making her think you're taking her to a bar or your couch for an all-nighter of gaming festivities? Stay away from the bright colors and focus on vintage or washed t-shirts like this one from Junk Food Clothing. Epic choice!

Man of Steel T-Shirt
Retail $27.00
JunkFoodClothing.com

BELT

Your pants gotta stay up, right? It's the perfect argument but a red, yellow and white flash belt with a belt buckle that is just as loud is not going to fly. We've found an excellent solution and it's called brushed metal. Granted, you don't get all the color you were looking for but it's more of an understated look we're going for anyway.

Transformer Belt Buckle
Retail $18.95
SuperheroStuff.com

UNDERWEAR

The ultimate hiding place: in your pants. (That's what she said). This somewhat defeats the public visual representation of letting your geek flag fly, but if you've run out of options, or you can't represent due to "uncontrollable" circumstances, you've got the underwear backup plan. Similarly to rocking some geek socks, you'll probably never be discovered. We should warn you not to forget what you've got on, for if the moment comes when you and your fine lady get to the point where you no longer require pants, you'll be exposed, in more ways than one. Good luck!

Star Trek Boxer Briefs
Retail $29.99
ThinkGeek.com

SOCKS

Name Socks
Retail $11.95
Gumball Poodle
SnorgTees.com

When it comes to socks, you can rock these day or night, hidden or in plain sight. The likelihood of these being seen is low, so if you need a hint of geek while keeping it practically incognito, this is your go-to. Just remember: if you get invited to her house and you have to take your shoes off, you'll be discovered.

GET THE LOOK

Ah, you're the type that wants to take the guess work out of getting it right. You're not the only one. Like what that guy up there is wearing? We've got all the details.

Copenhagen Navy Cotton/Wool JACKET $349 | Brown Leather BELT $79 | Slim Fit Cotton Multi-Color Collar SHIRT $129 | Navy Blue Cotton TIE $65 | Light Brown Cotton SLACKS $149

WHERE TO SHOP

Get this complete look from:

US.SuitSupply.com

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CHELSEA PEREIRA

This Catwoman loving spelling bee winner wants to give you some dating advice... on how to date her!!

It seems like it has always been a struggle for men to come up with the best way to approach a lady, let alone what we plan to say to her. We ask our dad, our friends, even strangers to give us a clue but what we tend to forget is that it all depends on the lady.

FIRST, LET US KNOW WHAT YOUR TYPE IS SO WE CAN KNOW IF WE'RE IN THE RUNNING.

I love a man with light eyes, and a strong build. When a man can swoop you up and throw you over their shoulder, I melt. A man with ambition is also super sexy.

SO... WE'RE LOOKING AT A CAPTAIN AMERICA TYPE. GOOD TO KNOW. WHAT FLAVORS DO YOU LIKE SO WE KNOW WHAT TO ORDER ON THIS DATE?

A glass of organic red wine and 85% dark chocolate. I am ... finishing up my new health food iPad/iPhone app and finishing my cookbook.

A WOMAN THAT CAN COOK IS ALWAYS A BONUS! WHAT ARE A FEW THINGS YOU COUNT ON A MAN DOING ON THAT FIRST DATE IN ORDER TO GIVE HIM ANOTHER CHANCE WITH A SECOND?

On the first date I would like the guy to ask the right questions and make an effort to understand who I am and what I stand for. It is also important to compliment me. Women need to feel as if their beauty is captivating. Do both of those and second date is earned.

WHO IS YOUR FAVORITE SUPERHERO AND WHAT ONE FAVOR WOULD YOU ASK OF HIM?

I love Batman. I would ask him to take me for a ride in the Batmobile.

photography by **Kyle Goldie**
produced by **Fremavi Studios**

SWIMSUIT BY **PALIQ SWIMWEAR** | JEWELRY BY **HEATHER GARDNER JEWELRY**

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A HOODED MAN RUNS THROUGH A FOREST BAREFOOT, DESPERATELY TRYING TO GET TO THE SHORE IN TIME TO SIGNAL A BOAT PASSING BY. HE TELLS US: I AM RETURNING. MY NAME IS OLIVER QUEEN.

SEASON 2 ARROW

WED 8/7C on CW

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TV REVIEW

Due to the fact that we are giving an extensive review on Season 2, we are obliged to tell you that there are some major spoilers going on here. If you haven't had a chance to catch the first Season of Arrow, get on it. If you're not sure where, check out Netflix for the entire first season. If you're behind on just Season 2, try Hulu Plus.

THE EMERALD ARCHER

by Ashley Febbo

A hooded man runs through a forest barefoot, desperately trying to get to the shore in time to signal a boat passing by. It's obvious by the length of his beard and disheveled appearance, as well as the narration, that this rescue has been a long time coming. He tells us, "I am returning. Not the boy who was ship wrecked, but as the man who will bring justice to those who have poisoned my city. My name is Oliver Queen." (Okay, you've got my attention.)

Oliver "Ollie" Queen comes back to Starling City after being stranded on a remote Pacific Island for five years, aptly translated to "Purgatory" in Mandarin. In true Batman style, our hero comes back home to a city plagued by greed, dishonesty and selfishness. Leading a double life as a billionaire playboy by day and a masked vigilante by night, our tortured antihero takes action against Starling City's ne'er-do-wells. This isn't a new origin story for the Green Arrow but with writer and producers Greg Berlanti, Marc Guggenheim, Andrew Kreisberg and a pilot directed by David Nutter, there's sure to be fun changes.

The pilot episode set the stage for an edgy, fast-paced, smart, action-packed drama with plenty of surprises. Season one was about Oliver reconnecting with his family, friends, past love and filling his nocturnal schedule with hunting down those who have failed his city. The beginning of the season takes on a rinse, lather, repeat feel where each week is about taking out a new bad guy in his father's little black book of crooks. It became redundant. Oliver picks out a name, confronts them as The Hood, gives them a chance to rectify their wrongdoings and when they fail to comply, they usually paid with their lives. Being a hot-tempered anarchist who isn't afraid to kill goes right along with Mike Grell's gritty revamping of the Green Arrow character after Kevin Smith resurrected him from the dead.

This is very much an origin story of Oliver Queen – we see where he learned his skills, what drives his reason for his Robin Hood habits and how it's shaped him to be the man he is today. It's very ambitious of the writers to have flashback scenes simultaneously playing alongside

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current events in every episode. I thought it would be very confusing to the audience, but I think they do a beautiful job of juxtaposing the past with the present. Each week we see a layer of the onion peeled away and a new piece of the Arrow mythology is revealed. It makes it very easy for any newcomers to follow right along, but having insider knowledge does make you feel excited for what comes next.

The major question with Arrow isn't about the quality of the series, but whether it's engrossing enough to hold your attention and if it fits the brand. To the credit of the writers, liberties must always be made when transferring an established storyline to a weekly televised series format. Ollie is usually portrayed as a loner in the comics, but the series has him immediately with a group of friends on and off the island. Some characters were inspired from the comics and some are completely made up, like Diggle. With the other characters, it was more about the script slowly revealing motivations and letting drama develop naturally.

THE MAJOR QUESTION WITH ARROW ISN'T ABOUT THE QUALITY OF THE SERIES, BUT WHETHER IT'S ENGROSSING ENOUGH TO HOLD YOUR ATTENTION AND IF IT FITS THE BRAND.

Every great superhero needs a crack team of trusted individuals to help them in their endeavors. Bodyguard John Diggle, played by David Ramsey, is set up to be a confidante for the Arrow right from the beginning. His ex-military background and time in battle gives him insight to the PTSD Oliver is experiencing post-Castaway status. Expertise in mixed martial arts, hardcore parkour and archery isn't all you need to take Starling City's Most Wanted. Enter tech specialist Felicity Smoak, played by Emily Bett Rickards, who helps with anything computer related. Both of these characters are vital for Oliver Queen to stay in touch with his humanity while he gets lost in vengeance. Ramsey gives a strong performance from the first episode and shows he's strong enough to keep Oliver grounded. Felicity on the other hand has the nervous, twitchy, nerdy girl role down perfectly, but her character lacks dimension.

Another performance that fell flat was Jessica De Gouw's portrayal of Helena Bertinelli, The Huntress. Her acting was forced and every episode with her in it, which gratefully was only two, was painful to watch.

RIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS BREAK, WE SAW THE INTRODUCTION OF BARRY ALLEN, WHICH WILL EVENTUALLY LEAD TO HIS OWN SERIES.

I keep flip-flopping between feelings of annoyance and admiration with Thea "Speedy" Queen and Dinah "Laurel" Lance. Thea (Willa Holland) starts off as a petulant wild child indulging in party drugs and rebels any chance she gets. Her character finally evened out in season two and she's promised to help boyfriend Roy Harper find out more about

the vigilante. Laurel (Katie Cassidy) has a huge heart but her character reaches a stalemate with her Ollie/Tommy love triangle. She does serve as a nice contrary to Oliver's approach to justice with her belief in the law prevailing above all to serve rectitude. For the first time, Laurel is not the Black Canary. We discover in season two that Sarah, who is not dead, chose that name for herself when she joined the League of Assassins.

I love that Capt. Jack Harkness (John Barrowman) is playing The Dark Archer, a volatile nemesis. I'm used to seeing him as the hero, but even as the villain, that megawatt smile and perfectly tousled hair still look sexy. Speaking of sex appeal, Stephen Amell's abs alone should be listed as a superpower. Manchildren watching can grumble at the exploitive shirtless scenes that run a little too long, but I could care less. In fact, I decree a minimum of half-naked salmon ladder reps every episode! But I digress; he's also pretty good at playing a self-loathing, empathetic, self-appointed masked archer of Starling City. His growing compassion raises important questions – Is violence ever the answer? Who should decide punishment? And is it pardonable to take justice into your own hands? And always the age-old question, what makes a hero?

This show started off strong, weaving an all-encompassing narrative as Oliver unravels "The Undertaking" mystery. I'm happy to see the villain-of-the-week regime subsided and went to a more central plot and enemy. The flashbacks were compelling and acted as a lifeline for the show. The finale episodes of the first season were a gratifying mix of action and emotional revelations, setting the stage for a great round two. It's not Nolan's Dark Knight or Smallville, but it's somewhere in between and I think that's a great place to be.

FOR THE FIRST TIME, LAUREL IS NOT THE BLACK CANARY. WE DISCOVER IN SEASON TWO THAT SARAH, WHO IS NOT DEAD, CHOSE THAT NAME FOR HERSELF WHEN SHE JOINED THE LEAGUE OF ASSASSINS.

Season two looks promising with the aftermath of The Glades being destroyed, the death of Tommy, the supposed death of Malcolm and what Moira has to face, being the poster child for mass homicide. Oliver finally settles on being an advocate for all of the "unfortunate" in Starling City. We get to see what happened to Slade after he's injected with Mirakuru and how it affects Roy, the future sidekick. Right before Christmas break, we saw the introduction of Barry Allen, which will eventually lead to his own series (He's The Flash, if you weren't sure). He gives our hero a real mask so he can stop using that awful grease paint. I love a great smoky-eye look but not so much on my heroes. I find Arrow is an impressive revitalization of the comic book hero, paying respect to the original story while making new strides.

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GYK

Girl You Know
FEBRUARY 2014
PHOTOGRAPHS BY KYLE GOLDIE

ASHLEY BROWN

Current City - Bellevue, WA
Professional Recruiter
Instagram: @ashleysarahbrown

YOU'RE SPORTING SOME HEAVY GEEK-WEAR. WE ARE IMPRESSED AND VERY CURIOUS. WHAT DO YOU HAVE ON YOUR GEEK CARD?
Where to begin? I've been collecting comic books since I was young, and have grown quite a collection over the years. I still love anything comic book related and add to my collection every year. My dream is to go to Comic–Con someday and wear a sexy latex Catwoman costume.
I'm also obsessed with video games. My favorite consoles are Xbox and Nintendo 64. I love playing shooting or fighting games on my Xbox (I'm a big fan of the Dead or Alive series), and old school Mario games on my N64. I'm hard to beat in Mario Kart!

THAT SOUNDS LIKE A CHALLENGE! NOW WE COULD GUESS, BUT WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE SUPERHERO?
That would have to be Nightwing, my superhero crush. I was always a fan of Robin... but when I realized Dick Grayson turned into a badass, I was in love. My Nightwing comic collection is pretty big. I even have a Nightwing action figure.

WE'RE CONVINCED! MANY OF OUR SUPERHERO-LOVING LADIES HAVE A NERDY PAST. ARE YOU THE SAME?
I have a scar on my ankle from riding my dirt bike in shorts and burning my leg on the exhaust pipe. I also have a scar on my leg from working on a science fair project in middle school and spilling the glue from the hot glue gun on myself. Anything in the name of science!

NIGHTWING, LATEX CATWOMAN COMIC CON FANTASIES AND EPIC SCIENCE FAIR MELTDOWNS. YOU'RE BEATING OUT A LOT OF THE GUYS RIGHT NOW! HOW DO WE COMPETE?
I LOVE a sense of humor in a guy. I'm a nerd and super silly, so if a guy can make me laugh, he can make me do anything.
There's nothing sexier than a guy who isn't afraid to be a dork. I like guys who are humble and genuine. It's cliché... but being yourself really is the best way to get the girl. It doesn't hurt if we also happen to share the same geeky interests.

WE DON'T MEAN TO BE FORWARD BUT WHAT DOES A GUY HAVE TO DO TO GET YOU TO SAY "YES" TO A DATE?
Be fun! Nothing is worse than a boring, awkward date. Let's have fun together! Dates don't need to be fancy. My dream date would be playing video games and eating delivery pizza together. Throw some ice cream in there and we're golden.

THAT'S AMAZINGLY SIMILAR TO OUR DREAM DATE! AND ICE CREAM TOO?
I have a huge sweet tooth! Sour candy, chocolate, ice cream, gummy bears... I could go on and on. The way to my heart is definitely through my stomach.

WE CAN'T BELIEVE A WOMAN LIKE YOU IS REAL. SERIOUSLY, ARE YOU JUST PULLING OUR LEG?
I've always been attracted to geeks, and I'm a complete geek myself. Nerdy guys are usually so much more interesting, plus we share common interests.

"I LOVE A SENSE OF HUMOR IN A GUY. IF A GUY CAN MAKE ME LAUGH, HE CAN MAKE ME DO ANYTHING!"

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